

**From:** Reiskin, Ed  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 25, 2018 9:15 AM  
**To:** All Staff <All\_Staff2@sfmta.com>  
**Cc:** Training & Organizational Development <orgdev@sfmta.com>  
**Subject:** Improving the SFMTA Work Environment

**Colleagues:**

Over the past several weeks, I have heard from many of you, expressing your concerns about the health of the agency and our work culture. I am grateful for your input and proud to work with colleagues who care so deeply for the agency, its mission and, ultimately, our customers, the people of San Francisco.

I realize the issues are much deeper and more troubling than I previously appreciated, and I am committed to continuing the dialogue so, together, we can identify those aspects of our culture that allow unproductive and unacceptable behaviors to persist and to positively change them.

We have been rocked by a lot of upsetting news. It has given us pause and caused many of us to question who we are as an organization and what values we stand for. Please know that I am deeply troubled by the situation in which we find ourselves and accept accountability as the leader of this agency. This situation makes me all the more determined to lead change that will move the agency in a direction that restores our collective sense of equilibrium and be a productive agency and one that we can all be proud of. For this, I believe it's essential that I hear directly from you.

Part of this process will be to create more opportunities for employees to share their concerns in a safe and supportive environment. By identifying these concerns, we can work together to develop and implement solutions. I thank those of you who have already reached out or otherwise articulated your concerns.

This week, I met with the agency's Senior Management Team to review and discuss the feedback that they have received from staff at all levels and all corners of the agency. The discussion yielded a lot of feedback, much of which was hard but necessary for me to hear. We had a rich discussion about how to move forward together, including a request from managers for new tools to help them best support their teams.

The key themes I continue to hear include:

- A lot of strong feelings; anger, frustration, disillusionment, sadness, fear, and more are circulating within the agency
- Disappointment that more has not been done to address the issues that are bubbling up, including by me directly
- Some colleagues are afraid to speak up
- Need for a better understanding of EEO and training on how to handle other issues that are not covered by EEO

Starting next week, I will be hosting an ongoing series of coffee hours to discuss colleague concerns as well as to maintain an open dialogue about agency issues more broadly. All SFMTA employees are welcome and encouraged to join in and invitations will be going out next week. I look forward to hearing more of your thoughts about what we stand for, how we do our work, how we work together and, most importantly, how we can improve. If you are interested in joining one of these groups, please contact Sophia Simpliciano at [Sophia.simpliciano@sfmta.com](mailto:Sophia.simpliciano@sfmta.com).

I want to be very clear that these coffee hours are not, in and of themselves, the answer. Instead, they are a step on the path to the solutions that we all clearly need and deeply desire.

To get to actionable solutions, I have asked our Organizational Development team to work in collaboration with the Outstanding Workplace Committee, Senior Management Team members, and others interested in participating to produce recommendations that address our agency's culture issues, recommendations that we can initiate quickly. Any colleague is welcome to join these efforts to create solutions that improve our workplace and how we work together. To join these efforts, please email your interest to [orgdev@sfmta.com](mailto:orgdev@sfmta.com).

We also recognize the need to get feedback and new ideas on an ongoing basis. To achieve this, we have set up an [Online Idea Box](https://www.surveymoz.com/s3/4648659/sfmta-idea-box) where you can share ideas and suggestions (<https://www.surveymoz.com/s3/4648659/sfmta-idea-box>).

As you are aware, Dolores Blanding has come onboard to help address the EEO process and the related issues of managing inappropriate behaviors. She will be developing recommendations to make the processes more effective and responsive to concerns I've heard. More details about how to contact Dolores will follow. Improving the processes we have to address employee issues so that employees have confidence in them is essential, and an important part of the larger task we have of changing the environment that makes space for those issues in the first place.

**Our most important asset is our people.** Together, the employees of the SFMTA do amazing work, operating and managing a complex transportation system. We touch people's lives every day from across the San Francisco Bay Area. We have a lot to be proud of.

But...in order to truly live up to our full potential, we must do better in terms of creating a constructive and positive work environment.

We need to stand on, live, and continuously exhibit our values of *Respect, Integrity and Inclusiveness*. We need to lift each other up and have each other's backs. **There is no place in our agency for bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or retaliation.** And, while we are not there yet, what we can and must do as an agency is to create an environment where every one of our colleagues feels that they are respected, valued, and safe.

I have heard you. I recognize my role in working with you to ensure rapid improvement, and I welcome you to join me.

Thanks.

**Ed**